

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23-25, 28 and 30-34 are pending in this application. Claims 3, 11, 20, 21, 23-25 and 28 are withdrawn by the Examiner as being directed to non-elected Species. By this amendment, claims 2, 3, 11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23-25 and 28 are amended. Claims 30-34 are added. No new matter is added. Claim 29 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of the subject matter recited in that claim. Support for the amendments to claim 2, 3, 11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23-25 and 28 and for added claims 30-34 is provided at least, for example, in the claims as originally filed, in Fig. 2, and in the specification at least on page 9, line 5 - page 10, line 3; page 11, lines 12-16, page 12, lines 3-16; and page 19, lines 2-7. A Request for Continued Examination is attached. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 2, 16, 17 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,338,500 to Perotto. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 2 recites, among other features, an initiator comprising a tubular side portion having a pair of grooves located on a surface of the tubular side portion in opposition to each other with respect to a longitudinal axis of the tubular side portion, the pair of grooves being configured to accelerate rupture of the tubular side portion and to propagate the flame in opposite directions upon ignition of an initiating explosive. Perotto cannot reasonably be considered to teach this combination of features.

Perotto discloses a hybrid gas generator 1 that includes an initiator 12. The initiator of Perotto is structurally different from the initiator recited in independent claim 2. As shown in Fig. 2, the Perotto initiator 12 includes a cylindrical side wall 27 that has a weakened portion in the form of a narrowed peripheral band 28 that extends radially around the tubular wall. The peripheral band 28 is surrounded by a pyrotechnic charge 13 provided in the form of an

annular block (*see, e.g.*, col. 5, lines 1-6 and 24-26 and Fig. 1). The peripheral band 28 is symmetric about the axis of revolution 4 of the initiator 12.

The initiator recited in claim 2 has a tubular side portion with a longitudinal axis and a pair of grooves located on a surface of the tubular side portion in opposition to each other with respect to the longitudinal axis. Applicants' specification describes the desirability of these features, for example, on page 3, line 26 - page 4, line 12, namely, providing an initiator in which flame energy is efficiently propagated from an initiating explosive to gas-generating material. The peripheral band 28 disclosed in Perotto cannot reasonably be interpreted as corresponding to a pair of grooves located on a surface of the tubular side portion in opposition to each other with respect to a longitudinal axis of the tubular side portion as recited in independent claim 2.

For at least the above reasons, Perotto does not teach the combination of all the features positively recited in independent claim 2. Further, claims 16 and 17 are also not taught by Perotto for at least the respective dependence of these claims, directly or indirectly, on allowable base claims, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over Perotto are respectfully requested.

For at least the reasons set forth above, and for the respective dependence on allowable base claim 2, which was previously indicated as being generic to all Species, withdrawn claims 3, 11, 20, 21, 23-25 and 28 are also not taught by the applied reference. Rejoinder and allowance of the withdrawn claims upon the allowance of the generic base claim are respectfully requested.

Added independent claim 31 is allowable over Perotto at least because this claim includes the allowable features of claim 2. Claims 30 and 32-34 are allowable for their

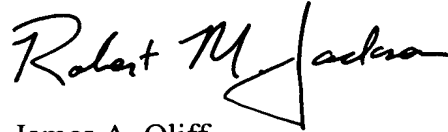
dependence on allowable base claims as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that these claims recite.

Claim 31 is also allowable over Perotto based on the separately patentable subject matter recited in this claim. For example, Perotto fails to teach, or to have suggested, an inflator comprising an initiator incorporated into a casing having two chambers, each chamber enclosing gas-generating materials and combustion accelerators, the chambers being disposed on one and the other sides, respectively, of the initiator so as to be in opposition to each other with respect to the initiator, as recited in independent claim 31. Perotto also neither teaches, nor would it have suggested, an initiator comprising a pair of grooves located on a surface of a tubular side portion in opposition to each other with respect to a longitudinal axis of the tubular side portion that propagate a flame in opposite directions toward gas-generating materials and combustion accelerators disposed in respective chambers of the casing upon ignition of an initiating explosive, as recited in independent claim 31.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2, 3, 11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23-25, 28 and 30-34 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Request for Continued Examination

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